

## TOPICAL HIGHLIGHTS

It is because the historical section of the bible represented by the “former prophets” is less well-known that I offer some guidance on a list of 18 passages from which the devotional reader and maybe even the preacher may glean topics that bring challenge and provoke thought.

In all the following stories and settings the “theocratic overruling” is evident. The God of Jacob and David is everywhere working out His will. This factor we call “divine sovereignty” and it is found profoundly active in the histories of the books of Samuel Kings and Chronicles.

1. Faith operates with the anointing of the Spirit Read 1Samuel 1 17-27 and notice that a man stricken by the Spirit and once familiar with prophecy in the Spirit fell under deep conviction and in the last analysis sought guidance from a medium and fell in battle casting away his shield that had not been anointed for battle. It was through inattention to the armour that Saul fell but not only so –principally it resulted from not being filled with the Spirit of God
2. The need for virtue and compassion Read 3 38-49 and discover through the gallant and compassionate life of Abner that greatness does not inhere in military gallantry but in the exercise of wisdom and attention to national wellbeing and especially that compassion so lacking in people of fortitude and power
3. Intimacy with God. Read 7 18-29 and many other psalms and occasions in the life of David will reinforce for you the vital value seeking the mind of God and Christ on matters of moment and daily life.
4. The importance of sharing responsibility is learned from noting that David used the gifting of fine people around him. He used a Hittite by the name of Jehoshaphat son of Ahilud as his war correspondent and a Priest called Seraiah as his secretary and Azmaveth as his librarian (cf 8.18 and 1Chronicles 27.25)
5. The famous story of Mephiboseth from Lodebar in 9.1-8 should do no injustice to the care he had from Maachah or the general prosperity of an area where Barzillai also grew to be among the greatest men of his time but his call to the palace as evidence of the covenant of Grace reflected in the lives of Jonathan and David is a great read and an unfailingly good topic.
6. By contrast the case of Hanun and kindness spurned in 10.1-6 supplies a biblical counterpoint to demonstrate the danger of abusing mercy and inviting judgment.
7. The case of Uriah in 11.1-27 along with Nathan’s parable of 12.1-14 yields the most felicitous means available in the book to reach the conscience with the subtlety of an inimitable parable.
8. The flight of David 15.13-16.8 affords as does the reaction of men and women to Christ and the cross a variety of reactions to David’s hardship. Read of the Priests; of the contrast of Ahithophel and Hushai; of Shimei here and at 19.16-23 and of Mephiboseth. Notice especially the adherence of David to God, his care of his friends-though his concubines suffered because he was minding the palace.
9. Study the way in which what we call “divine sovereignty” and Jews recognised as theocratic overruling enabled Hushai to gain acceptance against all odds and so the LORD turns the affairs of David around. 17 1-14.
10. The will to run with news on the part of two young men fleet-of-foot, Jonathan and Ahimaaz. Whilst the content and zeal of the gospel are

somewhat apposite in the story both are so vital to our presentation of Christ.  
Read 18 22-32

11. The Sorrow of David over Absalom and its impact for our concern for those who rebel from mercy is an acute devotional thought 19 1-10
12. A wise woman saves a city much like the poor man of Solomon's story. This story shows what one life thoroughly committed to the welfare of souls can do. Read 20 16-22
13. Shared responsibility- information is tucked away in 20 23-26 in just 4 verses about 7 very vital members of David's national leadership team. From the seven doubtless came two whose skills were may well have been creatively used in scripture-Jehoshaphat and Sheva
14. One of the conundrums of scripture is the naming of two Goliaths-one in 1 Samuel 17 and another in 2 Samuel 21 15-22. Whilst received wisdom makes the second a brother of the giant David slew it is hardly likely forty years on that such a man would still be fighting. These giants were more likely the sons of David's quarry.
15. We call men of great learning Alumni-they are lights of their day. Christ was deservedly called "the light of the world". David was known as "The lamp of Israel" for his spiritual teaching by the medium of music. 22.19-29
16. In 23 1-5 we discover a fine auto-biographical note from David's own lips or pen describing his concept of prophetic revelation and teaching.
17. Towards the end of a long life David imagines the benefit of learning how the development of his forces in Israel and Judah match and he determines to get a muster by census. This act of self reliance is visited with divine judgment. God offers 3 punishment options but in wisdom David decides to fall into the hands of God as a fourth option and out of that comes a meeting at the temple mount of Moriah with the "angel of the LORD" in the high point of his life. The severe lesson is that to be on the side of the "Angel" is better than to have a myriad of troops. With Israel of the latter day will stand the angel Michael. With us every day stand the Christ who took our judgment upon Him.

In all these contexts we see the Monarch of Israel Yahweh show that in the story of this chosen people He is LORD. It is no different in the lives of those who follow Jesus.